

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00173

GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: SOME BRITISH OBSERVATIONS ON IMPROVING
CONSULTATION IN NATO.

1. TICKELL DISCUSSED WITH US ON JANUARY 4 PROBLEM OF
IMPROVING CONSULTATION IN NATO IN LIGHT OF SUGGESTIONS
MADE BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE SECRETARY AT NAC
MINISTERIAL. HE SAW NO ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US
AND BRITISH POSITIONS, NOTING THAT THE BRITISH WELCOMED
THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL THAT POLITICAL DIRECTORS JOIN
THE COUNCIL PERIODICALLY FOR INTENSIVE CONSULTATION.

2. TICKELL SAID THAT BRITISH AT THIS POINT HAVE NO
CONCRETE IDEAS TO ADVANCE CONCERNING CONSULTATION.

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OFFICIALS WISH TO CONSULT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY TO ELICIT

HIS THINKING IN THE LIGHT OF THE STATEMENTS HE MADE ON CONSULTATION AT NAC MINISTERIAL AND IN THE PRIVATE SESSION IN BRUSSELS ON DECEMBER 11. HE UNDERScoreD, HOWEVER, THAT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HAD SAID HE THOUGHT THE EXISTING MACHINERY OF NATO SHOULD BE USED, AND TICKELL FELT CERTAIN THAT THE BRITISH WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE NEW COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES.

3. TICKELL INDICATED THAT THE BRITISH ARE TAKING VERY SERIOUSLY THE OBLIGATION TO CONSULT IN NATO, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE MINISTERIAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD DECIDED TO ATTEND THE SPC MEETING IN BRUSSELS ON JANUARY 11 FOR THE DISCUSSION OF CSCE ISSUES, ALTHOUGH THE FOREIGN OFFICE COULD PERFECTLY WELL HAVE SENT APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS TO UK NATO FOR THAT MEETING. EXPRESSING SOME PERSONAL VIEWS ON CONSULTATION, TICKELL SAID THAT IT IS ESSENTIALLY A QUESTION OF THE WILL TO CONSULT; EVERYONE HAS TALKED A LOT ABOUT CONSULTATION BUT HAS NOT IN THE PAST DONE NEARLY ENOUGH. CONSULTATION, HE OBSERVED, IS AN ARDUOUS AND OFTEN ANNOYING BUSINESS, DOING IT PROPERLY INVOLVES A "DIMENSION OF DIFFICULTY" WHICH OFTEN LEADS GOVERNMENTS TO AVOID THE IMPORTANT BUT BURDENSOME TASK OF REALLY CONSULTING THEIR PARTNERS BEFORE TAKING FIRM DECISIONS AND ANNOUNCING THEM PUBLICLY.

SOHM

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